

REVELATION

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Week 9

Summary

In this profound exploration of Scripture, we journey from Genesis to Revelation, uncovering the intricate connections between the beginning and end of God's story. We delve into the Tower of Babel narrative, seeing how it sets the stage for the spiritual battle that unfolds throughout history. This story isn't just ancient history – it's a powerful metaphor for the human tendency to elevate ourselves and seek our own glory apart from God. As we examine the parallels between Babel and the Babylon of Revelation, we're challenged to consider where in our own lives we might be building towers of self-sufficiency rather than relying on God's grace. The message reminds us that God's plan for redemption was in place from the very beginning, symbolized by the gold, precious stones, and pearls found in Eden's rivers – the same elements that will adorn the New Jerusalem. This beautiful continuity in God's plan encourages us to trust in His sovereign design for our lives, even when we can't see the full picture.

Key Points

- The Tower of Babel represents human pride and the origin of false religion
- Babylon in Revelation symbolizes a worldwide system of false religion and commerce
- God's plan for redemption is evident from Genesis to Revelation
- The elements of gold, precious stones, and pearls have spiritual significance throughout Scripture
- Christians are called to resist the allure of Babylon and focus on God's eternal plan
- The wilderness experience is important for spiritual growth and understanding
- God's nature is unchangeable, like pure gold, and He refines believers like precious stones

Scripture References

Mentioned

1. Genesis 1-3 (Creation account and Fall of Man)
2. Genesis 2:23-24
3. Genesis 3:15
4. Genesis 10:8-12 (Nimrod)
5. Genesis 11:1-9 (Tower of Babel)
6. Ezekiel 8:14 (Tammuz)
7. Luke 12:10
8. Revelation 1:18
9. Revelation 13 (The Beast)
10. Revelation 17 (The Harlot and the Beast)
11. Revelation 18 (Commercial Babylon)
12. Revelation 21:19,21 (New Jerusalem)
13. Isaiah 53 (Song of the Suffering Servant)
14. Psalm 23:2
15. James 3:9-10 (Tongue praising and cursing)
16. 1 John 4:4
17. Acts 2 (Pentecost)
18. 1 Corinthians 14:33
19. Galatians 4:4 ("In the fullness of time")
20. Ephesians 5:18 (Don't be drunk with wine, but filled with the Spirit)

Suggested

Suggested relevant verses for themes discussed:

21. Colossians 1:15-20 (Supremacy of Christ)
22. 2 Corinthians 11:2 (Church as the bride of Christ)
23. Matthew 7:15 (False prophets)
24. 1 Timothy 6:10 (Love of money)
25. Romans 12:2 (Not conforming to the pattern of this world)
26. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 (Godlessness in the last days)
27. 1 Peter 5:8 (Be alert against the devil)
28. Hebrews 13:8 (Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever)
29. Matthew 28:19-20 (Great Commission)
30. John 14:6 (Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life)

Small Group Guide

Key Takeaways:

1. Babylon represents a system of false religion and idolatry that has existed since the Tower of Babel.
2. God's redemptive plan has been in place since the beginning, as evidenced by the gold, precious stones, and pearls in Eden.
3. The book of Revelation is about seeing Christ's work from Genesis to Revelation, not just future events.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does understanding the historical context of Babylon (from the Tower of Babel to Revelation) change your perspective on evil in the world today?
2. The pastor mentions fear, shame, and hiding as common human responses to sin. How have you experienced these in your own life, and how has your faith helped you overcome them?
3. Discuss the concept of "wilderness experiences" mentioned in the sermon. Have you had any such experiences? How did they shape your faith?
4. How does the imagery of gold, precious stones, and pearls in both Genesis and Revelation speak to God's character and His plans for humanity?
5. The sermon talks about the dangers of inclusivity in religion. How can we as Christians maintain our exclusive claims about Christ while still showing love and respect to those of other faiths?
6. Reflect on the pastor's statement: "The question is not do we disagree with the world, the question is how do we disagree?" How can we disagree with the world in a Christ-like manner?



Practical Applications:

1. Spend some time this week reflecting on your own "wilderness experiences." Journal about how God has used these times to refine and polish you.
2. Practice seeing yourself and others as "precious stones" that God is continually refining. How might this perspective change your interactions with others?
3. Be intentional about "investing" time rather than just spending it this week. Choose one person to invest in through encouragement, mentoring, or acts of service.
4. Examine areas in your life where you might be influenced by "Babylonian" values (materialism, false spirituality, etc.). Pray for discernment and strength to resist these influences.



Day 1: The Alpha and Omega Reading: Revelation 1:8, Genesis 1:1-5

Devotional: As we begin this journey, let's reflect on God's eternal nature. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Just as He spoke light into existence at creation, He continues to speak light into our lives today. How might you open your heart to God's voice this week? Consider the areas of your life that need His illuminating presence. Remember, the same God who crafted the universe is intimately involved in your life, desiring to guide you from darkness into His marvelous light.

Day 2: The Tower of Babel and God's Plan Reading: Genesis 11:1-9, Acts 2:1-12

Devotional: The story of Babel reminds us of humanity's tendency to elevate ourselves, seeking our own glory rather than God's. Yet, God's response wasn't just judgment, but also a promise of future redemption. At Pentecost, we see a beautiful reversal of Babel - unity in diversity through the Holy Spirit. How might God be calling you to humble yourself and seek His glory today? In what ways can you contribute to unity in your community, celebrating the diversity of God's people while proclaiming His love?

Day 3: The Harlot and the Bride Reading: Revelation 17:1-6, Ephesians 5:25-27

Devotional: The stark contrast between Babylon (the harlot) and the Church (the bride of Christ) challenges us to examine our own hearts. Are we adorning ourselves with worldly riches and power, or with the righteousness of Christ? God calls us to be set apart, holy and blameless. Today, reflect on areas where you might be compromising your faith for worldly gain. Ask God to purify your heart and help you live as His beloved bride, radiant in His love and grace.

Day 4: The Wilderness Experience Reading: Exodus 3:1-12, Luke 4:1-13

Devotional: The wilderness, while often challenging, can be a place of profound spiritual growth and divine encounter. Moses and Jesus both had significant wilderness experiences that prepared them for their callings. Are you in a wilderness season? Instead of viewing it as punishment, see it as an opportunity for intimacy with God and preparation for what He has next. How might you create intentional "wilderness time" in your life to hear God's voice more clearly?

Day 5: The New Jerusalem Reading: Revelation 21:9-27, 1 Peter 2:4-10

Devotional: The description of the New Jerusalem, with its foundations of precious stones and gates of pearl, isn't just about future glory - it's a picture of what God is building now through His church. You are a living stone in this spiritual house. How are you allowing God to shape and polish you? Consider the unique gifts and experiences God has given you. How can you use them to contribute to building His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven? Remember, even in your imperfections, God sees you as precious and is continually refining you to reflect His glory.